



Peo Hansen, Stefan Jonsson. *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism*. London: Bloomsbury Publisher, 2014. 344 S. ISBN 978-1-78093-001-5; ISBN 978-1-4725-1943-6.

Reviewed by Giuliano Garavini

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P. Hansen u.a.: Eurafrika

Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson have combined their skills in history and cultural studies to write a powerful essay on the links between European integration and colonialism. The title of the book “Eurafrica: the Untold History of Integration and Colonialism” tells much of the story: European integration has everything to do with colonialism. This is already a statement that runs counter to the majority view that links European integration with the end of colonial empires rather than with the perpetuation of colonialism.

Hansen and Jonsson are to be commended for having written a book on European integration that will be of interest to scholars both of postcolonial studies as well as of modern European history in general. European integration history is normally written for a niche audience and is craving for grand narratives. These have shifted from the narrative of “European saints”, the federalists such as Monnet or De Gasperi that made peace in Europe possible, to the “Milwardian” narrative of European integration as simply a rational way to reinforce nation states and their welfare systems. Hansen and Jonsson point to another possible grand narrative, namely that the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) was born out of a common European geopolitical and economic effort to retain colonial empires in Africa. This reviewer fully recognizes the strength of the authors’ argument that no credible explanation of the European integration process is possible without looking outside the geographical boundaries of Europe, looking beyond the Franco-German special relationship.

“Eurafrica” has pages that read like a novel. The authors’ technique involves exploring all the possible conventional explanations for a certain European initiative (showing an excellent grasp of the scholarly literature), thus conveying to the reader the sense that there are crucial omissions in these claims. Their aim is to highlight the inconvenient truth that European integration was not a way to spread universal norms and values à human rights and the rule of law à but that its promoters were racist, imperialistic and imbued with the idea of the superiority of “western civilization”. Eurafrica also hints at a possible explanation of why the Eurafrican roots of the European idea are characterized by “historical amnesia”.

The Eurafrican story starts in the interwar period. The authors convincingly argue that the ideologues of a united Europe, including Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the Austrian-Japanese elitist and promoter of the Pan-Europa movement, were obsessed with the idea that the continent was decaying and that it thus needed to export people and import raw materials. The idea of Eurafrica was born out of the fear for the emerging “colored nations”, invigorated by the degrading presence of black soldiers serving in the French army policing the Ruhr. Paneuropa (including most of Africa) was supposed to counterbalance Panamerica and Panasia.

The second part of the book deals with the period from the end of WWII to the start of the Treaty of Rome negotiations in 1955. Decolonization had taken a huge bite out of the colonies in Asia, but still left the vast ma-

majority of African colonies untouched. The British and the French soon attempted Eurafrican cooperation through Bevin's idea of the building of a "Third World Power". Pointing to the failings of Anglo-French cooperation in 1949, Hansen and Jonsson point out the colonial dimensions in many other western European efforts at cooperation in the 1950s: from NATO, through the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) and the European Defence Community (EDC) to the European Political Cooperation (EPC). The authors convincingly argue that EPC, the most serious attempt to create a quasi-federal Europe, was rejected by the French parliament because it "threatened the cohesion of the French Union and, with it, France's global influence" (p.142).

The third section of the book is probably the most detailed, researched and engaging. The authors demonstrate that without Eurafrica no Treaty of Rome would have been signed and no EEC would have been created. France would never have sacrificed its African vocation for its European calling. Moreover, France's five partners were all in agreement that the challenges of Arab nationalism embodied by Nasser and of the Asian-African anti-colonial movement had to be met by a common engagement with Africa. Both the Socialists and the Christian Democrats shared a fundamentally racist vision of Africa inherited from the interwar period, that of the black continent devoid of history, its peoples in need of civilization and its economy complementary (subaltern that is) to the European one. Part IV of the Rome Treaty stated that the EEC would be a Eurafrican community, with preferences for the goods of the associated countries (but limits to the free movement of people), coupled with a European development fund. The EEC was not simply "European" but was born "Eurafrican".

In the concluding chapter Hansen and Jonsson argue that their book shows that there had never been a clear break between the era of colonialism and the era of decolonization: Eurafrica and its successor, the European Commission's Directorate General VIII, were instrumental to keeping the empire alive by Europeanizing it.

This is a book I largely admire but also raises some serious objections. What was the Eurafrica born out of the

1957 Rome Treaty? Was it the embodiment of the idea of a common European colonial project with which the European elites had toyed with since the end of WWI? I must stick here with the majority view that Part IV of the EEC treaty (Eurafrica) was a cover for French efforts to reinforce Algeria and the rest of its African colonies, while making its partners pay economically and politically for it. Hansen and Jonsson rightly point out that the European statesmen of the time, from Spaak through Mollet to Adenauer, all believed in the superiority of the European race, that Nasser was a new Hitler and that Eurafrica served to counterbalance the wave coming from Bandung. Yet the core of Eurafrica was about the preservation of the French empire rather than the creation of a European one. Would the French have shared the oil they had found in Algeria with their EEC partners? The simple answer is no: they did not share the oil and they did not ask European money to pay for it.

This leads me to the argument that 1957 Eurafrica simply inaugurated the era of "neocolonialism" through international institutions (such as the EC/EU) that we are still living in today. The changes in the 1960s and the 1970s both in Western Europe and in Africa were so profound that to argue for such a linear continuity is at best an oversimplification. Was, the nationalization of oil in Algeria in 1971 and the outcome reached with the Nigerian leadership in the Lomé negotiations with the EEC in 1975 really part of the same world out of which Eurafrica was born in 1957 (with basically no consultation with African leaders)?

To sum up, Eurafrica certainly proves that the "founders" of the EEC were no saints and that the preservation of the colonial empire was a key motivation for every European project, starting with Paneuropa leading to the Rome Treaty. The lesson here is that every European integration project has a not necessarily peaceful and often aggressive impact beyond European borders. Still Eurafrica itself was short-lived and what came after it, under the name of "development policy", was different from it. Eurafrica represented more the end of a geopolitical, economic and cultural era rather than the opening of a new one.

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